

First New Guinea Record of *Thylacinus*.
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FIRST NEW GUINEA RECORD OF *THYLACINUS*

In April 1960, during the course of an archeological expedition to the Eastern Highlands District of the Territory of New Guinea, Susan E. Bulmer excavated the left half of a mandible of *Thylacinus*, the Tasmanian or marsupial "wolf." The thylacine is either extinct or on the verge of extinction in Tasmania, but during the Pleistocene (and earlier?)

this carnivorous marsupial ranged widely on the Australian continent. This remarkable discovery, however, is the first evidence of the occurrence of *Thylacinus* on the island of New Guinea.

The site of the excavation was a rock shelter at Kiowa, approximately 3 miles southeast of the Chuave Government Station, at an elevation of about 5,000 feet (1,525 meters) above sea level in the central highlands of the Australian administered eastern half of New Guinea. Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Bulmer (*in litt.*, 4 January 1963) have sent me additional details. The rock shelter is at the entrance to an extensive series of limestone caves. The mandible came from "Layer 9" of the excavation, 9 to 10 feet below the surface. The lowest level excavated, "12," lay on a boulder layer at about 15 feet below present ground level. "Layer 9" contained considerable quantities of bone material, as all layers did, and also pebble-tools (or pebble-choppers) and large and small flake implements. The age of the ash and/or charcoal found in "Layers 3, 6, 8, 10 and 12" will be determined by carbon 14 analysis.

The Bulmer's suspicion that the mandible was that of a thylacine was originally confirmed by Dr. Pat Bergquist of the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Basil Marlow of the Australian Museum in Sydney, and Dr. W. D. L. Ride of the Western Australian Museum in Perth further confirmed the identity of this mandible. The mandible has been examined by Dr. D. A. Hooijer, Dr. M. C. McKenna and Dr. R. G. Van Gelder at the American Museum, where it has been compared with our Recent material from Tasmania. The mandible (AMNH No. 160248) lacks I₁₋₃, the canine and M₄. A large portion of the ascending ramus and the lateral extensions of the condyle are missing, but fortunately the so-called "marsupial shelf," or sharply inflected angle of the jaw, is intact.

The mandible is that of an adult, if the criterion of complete eruption of M₄ is used. Although the M₄ is missing, the form of the alveoli of the two roots proves that this molar was fully erupted. There are a number of striking differences in measurement and conformation between this mandible (AMNH No. 160248) and that of an unsexed subadult of comparable size (AMNH No. 77701) from Tasmania in which M₄ is only partially erupted. The "greatest length of mandible" measurements for these 2 specimens are, respectively: 152.4 mm (a small portion of bone is missing from both anterior and posterior ends) and 157.0 mm. However, the M₁₋₃ (crown measurement) figures are 32.1 and 36.2 mm respectively; the "height of mandible on the labial side" measurements, made from the top of the bony ridge separating the M₃ and M₄ alveoli to the inferior border of the body of the mandible, are 27.7 and 23.8 mm respectively. The New Guinea mandible differs also from adults of known sex from Tasmania in our collection. A complete description of this mandible together with drawings, photographs and measurements is being prepared for publication in the Novitates series of the American Museum.—HOBART M. VAN DEUSEN, *Archbold Expeditions, Department of Mammalogy, American Museum of Natural History. Received 1 March 1963.*